(c) what are the other details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI BALASAHEB VIKHE PATIL): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) Being collected and will be made available as soon as possible.

Weakening of consensus behind economic reforms

3302. SHRI KULDIP NAYYAR: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether he has announced that the consensus behind the economic reforms was weakening;

(b) if so, the specific instances where the understanding is absent;

(c) whether he is contemplating any steps to remove the causes for the weakening of the consensus; and

(d) the reasons for not encouraging a wider debate on the steps which are necessary for the consensus?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI YASHWANT SINHA): (a) to (d) Addressing a meeting in Calcutta, the Finance Minister regretted the weakening of political consensus on the economic reforms agenda of the government in the last few months. He stressed that people who had advocated reforms when they were in power were opposing them now. He said that the only way to strengthen consensus was to improve the quality of life of the common man, hence it would be his endeavour to keep the common man interest at the centre of all economic reforms programme.

Reduction in import duty on soya oil

3303. SHRI C.M. IBRAMIM: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state;

(a) whether Government have reduced import duty on soya-oil from 60 to 15 per cent;

(b) if so, whether it is a fact that the Indian farmer is doubly hit this year, one becouse of loss and damage to soyabean crops due to excess rains, and secondly because of crash in prices of soyabean due to heavy reduction in import duty on edible oils; and

(c) whether Government of Madhya Pradesh and other representing trade and farmers have proposed increase in import duty on soya-oil and other edible oils, if so, the details thereof and Government's decision thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI V. DHANANJAYA KUMAR): (a) No Sir. There has been no reduction in the import duty on soya-oil this hear.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Representations have been received from government of Madhya Pradesh and the trade for increasing the import duty on edible oils including soya-oil. The present import policy ensures availability of edible oils at reasonable prices to the consumers and facilitates actual users namely, manufactures of refined edible oils and vanaspati, to access raw material at a lower rate of duty. It also discourages indiscriminate imports. The present import policy is in the interest of consumers, farmers and processors.

I. T. exemption for Sri Venkateshwara Jalanidhi Scheme

3304. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that Sri Tirumala Tirupathi Devasthanams, Tirupathi, Andhra Pradesh has submitted a proposal for Income-Tax exemption for its Sri Venkateshwara Jalanidhi Scheme;

(b) whether the Ministry of Finance is aware of the national importance of the project which is going to serve the needs of the hundreds of thousands of pilgrims visiting the Holy place; and

(c) if so, the reasons for taking so much time in giving IT concession even after so many letters to the Finance Minister and the Prime Minister by the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI V. DHANANJAYA KUMAR): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir.

(c) The proposals were considered by the National Committee for Promotion of Social and Economic Welfare on several occasions and it did not recommend the case for approval under section 35AC of the I.T. Act, 1961. In response to the Chief Minister of Andhra Pardesh's letters, the Finance Minister has conveyed the Committee's decision.

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